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Title : Need to provide shelter and drinking water at public places in heat-wave affected areas of Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Orissa.

SHRI B. MAHTAB (CUTTACK): Sir, summer has only begun but soaring temperatures across the country have already claimed the lives of about 34 people officially though we have got a respite last night and had persistent rain for at least two hours. But, Delhi experienced a maximum temperature of 44.4 degree centigrade on Monday last week whereby authorities had to call on schools to close a week earlier than scheduled for summer vacation because of the blistering heat. In Sriganganagar in Rajasthan, the mercury shot up up to 47.6 degree Celsius. Temperatures are far higher than what is normal for this time of the year. The temperature in Amritsar was 45 degrees centigrade, 7 degrees above normal and even in Shimla temperature has risen up to 29 degrees, which is 7 degrees above normal. I am giving these names because it has affected the whole part of northern India and Central India is now reeling under it.

The Meteorological Department has warned that temperatures will rise further. This warning should be taken note of very seriously. The toll can be expected to rise. The effects of the heat wave have been compounded by the acute shortage of water and power. While the severe heat has made life miserable for middle class, it is the poor and the homeless, who are forced to face the brunt of nature's fury. Most of the casualties of the heat wave are from Uttar Pradesh and Orissa. Almost all those, who died, are from the underprivileged sections of the society. Many of those died are homeless construction workers, agricultural labourers and rickshaw pullers who had to continue working in the soaring heat to earn their daily wages. It is not harsh weather alone that has contributed to the death toll but poverty that stands in the way of millions in this country from finding shelter from the heat and food and water to tide over dehydration. Deaths due to heat wave are a familiar story that unfolds every year across this country.

I urge upon the Government to take steps to provide protection to the poor from the soaring heat. Construction of temporary shelters and provision of drinking water at public places would reduce the incidents of dehydration and heat stroke that have resulted in so many deaths. It is still not too late for the Government to take such measures to reduce the impact of the scorching heat. The Government must take steps to protect poor from this heat wave. Thank you, Sir.